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FM AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 1490
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RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKDIA/DIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/CJTF HOA IMMEDIATE
RUZEFAA/CDR USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE
RUZEFAA/HQ USAFRICOM STUTTGART GE IMMEDIATE
RHMCSUU/CDR USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L NAIROBI 002319

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR AF/E AND A/S CARSON

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/15/2019

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [SO](#)

SUBJECT: SOMALIA-TFG'S HIRAAAN FORCE COMMANDER AND LOCAL
LEADERS FRUSTRATED BY LACK OF SUPPORT

Classified By: Somalia Unit PolOff Joe Trimble for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: TFG General Mukhtar's forces as of November 4 lost a strategic location five miles outside of the Hiraan capital Beledweyne to Hisbul Islam (HI) militia. TFG and TFG-aligned forces reportedly took the location 3 days before, fueled by local support but frustrated by lack of political or military support from the TFG. Mukhtar during an October 30 telecon with Somalia Unit PolOff said the TFG has not provided any support to his forces and accused Sanboloshi of working to undercut local governance efforts in Hiraan. We think the TFG-HI stalemate is likely to continue and, as a result, positions near Beledweyne will continue to periodically change hands. However, a far worse and plausible scenario would include an increasing proportion of Hiraan's population aligning with HI leader Ma'ow due to TFG efforts, real or perceived, to block the evolution of local governance in Hiraan. We are encouraging Hiraan leaders, elders, and Mukhtar to attempt to deconflict any competing initiatives in the region and to move forward with local efforts to politically and militarily confront HI. End Summary.

¶2. (C) TFG General Mukhtar's forces as of November 4 lost a strategic location near the Hiraan capital Beledweyne to Hisbul Islam (HI) militia. TFG and TFG-aligned forces reportedly took the location 3 days before when they, supported by the local community that has been feeding and watering Mukhtar's forces, left their base outside of Beledweyne and moved on a HI hilltop position approximately five kilometers outside of the town. HI technicals reportedly re-entered Beledweyne after taking their hilltop position back from TFG forces. (Note: TFG and HI forces for several weeks reportedly remained outside of Beledweyne due to requests from clan elders. Control of Beledweyne and its environs has changed hands multiple times in recent months. End note.)

¶3. (C) Mukhtar during an October 30 telecon with Somalia Unit PolOff said Sanboloshi is working to undercut local governance efforts in Hiraan. According to Mukhtar, Sanboloshi intends to appoint General Hassan Ali "Qeyloy," a relative and member of the Italian Somali diaspora, as governor of Hiraan. Mukhtar said Sanboloshi did not consult local leaders about his choice for governor; "Qeyloy" is out of touch with the region, Mukhtar said. (Note: Multiple contacts tell us local leaders and several TFG MPs from Hiraan have been working to build local governance and to ensure the local population that their support of Mukhtar's forces will lead to local say in an evolving Hiraan administration. End note.) Mukhtar said many Hiraan residents think Sanboloshi is responsible for blocking additional TFG funding to Hiraan. (Note: Ma'ow was formerly the governor of

Hiraan but in July defected to HI shortly after Sanboloshi gave him and Mukhtar nearly \$100,000 to bolster the TFG's presence on the ground. Mukhtar and local Hiraan leaders claim they only received \$16,000, and that Ma'ow defected and absconded with the remaining money. End note.)

14. (C) Comment: We think the TFG-HI stalemate is likely to continue and, as a result, positions near Beledweyne will continue to periodically change hands. However, a far worse, but plausible scenario would include an increasing proportion of Hiraan's population aligning with Ma'ow due to TFG's efforts, real or perceived, to block the evolution of local governance in Hiraan. We are encouraging Hiraan leaders, elders, and Mukhtar to attempt to deconflict any competing initiatives in the region and to move forward with local efforts to politically and militarily confront HI. End comment.

RANNEBERGER